

House Republicans Attempt to Jam Tax Legislation Through Congress, Hide Tax Cuts for the Wealthy from the American People

Similar to their TrumpCare efforts, House Republicans are once again trying to jam a partisan bill through Congress without any input from the American people. House Republicans are expected to unveil their tax legislation tomorrow and will attempt to pass it before Thanksgiving with the explicit goal of allowing virtually no time for Members and the public to review their legislation and voice concerns.

Unlike the bipartisan tax reform bill that was signed into law in 1986, House Republicans are pursuing a closed process to hide the fact that they are passing massive tax cuts for the wealthy, raising taxes on middle class families, and exploding the deficit. Here is a look at how the two processes compare:

	<u>1986 Bipartisan Reform</u>	<u>2017 GOP Framework</u>
<u>Framework released</u>	November 1984: Treasury Department releases a detailed tax reform proposal known as “Treasury I” May 1985: White House releases a revised plan known as “Treasury II”	Congressional GOP releases an outline three weeks before bill text—including no revenue estimates
<u>Length of framework</u>	“Treasury I” was over 800 pages “Treasury II” was almost 500 pages	9 pages
<u>Amount of time spent studying the framework</u>	Six months- November 1984 through May 1985, before Ways & Means began drafting a bill	None
<u>Days of public hearings on the framework</u>	Ways & Means held 30 days of public hearings on the first framework from February 27 - May 16, 1985	None
<u># of witnesses</u>	More than 450 witnesses during public hearings on the first framework	0 witnesses
<u>Amount of time spent on hearings before writing legislation</u>	Nearly four months (Hearings began June 4, 1985; Ways & Means began writing the bill September 18, 1985)	None
<u>Length of time spent drafting and marking-up legislation in Committee</u>	Ways & Means conducted 26 days of markup on the tax reform bill between September 18 - December 3, 1985	TBD (Republicans indicating it will be less than a week)
<u>Length of time between mark-up and Floor consideration</u>	Two weeks--the House passes the bill on December 17, 1985	TBD (Republicans indicating it will be less than a week)
<u>Bipartisan support?</u>	Yes	No

How is this approach playing out in the press?

Bloomberg: [Secrecy, Division, Complaints: GOP Tax Rollout Echoes Obamacare Repeal](#)

“Congress is trying to **ram through a bill** that would reshape the U.S. economy in just a few short weeks, but its leaders have kept the plan **shrouded in secrecy** and **released not a word of legislative text.**”

“Sound familiar? The GOP is handling its tax-overhaul rollout in **almost the exact way it did the Obamacare repeal effort and hoping for a different result.** The Republicans’ seven-year quest to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act imploded as they tried to bypass Democrats but failed to rally their own forces amid unresolved policy disputes.”

“Already, many **lawmakers are making similar complaints about the tax effort** -- saying they need more details before they can commit to the audacious timeline House Speaker Paul Ryan has vowed to meet: He wants a bill through the House by Thanksgiving.” [10/25/17]

Wall Street Journal: [GOP’s Strategy on Tax Plan Raises Concerns of Health-Overhaul Replay](#)

“As Republicans push forward to rewrite the tax code, some stakeholders are warning that Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell is **adopting the same legislative strategy that proved unsuccessful with health care.**”

“**Republicans are taking that same approach** on the tax package—**despite efforts by some Democrats to engage** in the process, according to lawmaker interviews.”

“Democrats say they have not seen the tax legislation and don’t expect to see it before it is released to the public next week.” [10/27/17]

Business Insider: [Republicans' process for passing a tax plan looks strikingly similar to that for healthcare — but they say this time will be different](#)

“A significant factor in the downfall of the repeated attempts to overhaul the US healthcare system was the **Senate's intent on not passing legislation through the regular order**, instead bypassing the 60-vote threshold in favor of the process known as reconciliation.”

“**Republicans are now employing the same tactics**, with a handful of small changes, to their tax plan.” [10/20/17]

Here is a look at what Republicans are saying about their own process:

Rep. Chris Collins (R-N.Y.): “We have no details...All anyone wants to talk about, especially the business people and so forth, is the tax reform. And I can’t tell them anything, because I have no details.” [Washington Post, [10/29/17](#)]

Rep. Jim Renacci (R-OH): “There are a lot of open issues...” [Politico, [10/28/17](#)]

Rep. Dave Schweikert (R-AZ): “[Schweikert] responded succinctly when asked what issues are still outstanding: ‘All of them.’” [Bloomberg, [10/25/17](#)]

Rep. Matt Gaetz of Florida (R-FL): “Political Rorschach test. Everybody stares at the inkblot and sees what they want to see, because we don’t have a bill... [Republicans have to vote for a budget] that nobody believes in so that we have a chance to vote for a tax bill that nobody’s read... You know, I was watching ‘Indiana Jones’ the other night, and I sort of feel like this tax bill is like the ark of the covenant... “It must be so magnificent that if we actually laid our eyes on it, it would eviscerate all of us. It would lay waste to nations.” [Huffington Post, [10/25/17](#)]

Rep. Chris Collins (R-NY): “‘We don’t know the brackets, We don’t know where we are on estate taxes. We don’t know where we are on’ the state and local tax deduction -- a contentious issue for members like Collins from high-tax states. ‘We don’t know where we are on the size of the child tax credit,’ he continued. ‘We don’t know, we don’t know, we don’t know, we don’t know, we don’t know, we don’t know.’” [Bloomberg, [10/25/17](#)]

Rep. Peter King (R-NY): “I haven’t seen anything positive at all. They keep saying they’re going to take care of it.” [Huffington Post, [10/25/17](#)]

Sen. Bob Corker (R.-TN): “One of the things that typically you do in governing is you reach consensus but you use both sides of the aisle to do so...” [Wall Street Journal, [10/27/17](#)]

Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK): “Have you seen what we're doing? There wasn't even a bathroom break between health care and taxes... We are just moving straight on through.” [CNN, [9/29/17](#)]

Republicans ought to work with Democrats on a bipartisan bill to provide middle class tax relief rather than a partisan bill that gives tax cuts to the wealthy and explodes the deficit.